

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1-34 are pending. Claims 1, 10, and 33 have been amended in this reply. No claims have been canceled, and no new claims have been added. Claims 1-34 will therefore be pending upon entry of the above amendments.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's reaffirmation in the office action that claims 19-22, 29, and 30 are allowable. Applicants also gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 2-6, 9, 14, 25, 26, 28, and 34, which have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 7, 8, 10-13, 15-18, 23, 24, 27, and 31-33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,024,584 ("Lemke"). Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 7, 8, 10-13, 15-18, 23, 24, 27, and 31-33, as amended herein, are patentably distinct from Lemke for the following reasons, among others.

Claim 1 of the present application has been amended herein to recite that the first common base and the second common base are substantially identical and interchangeable. Claim 10 has been amended to recite inserting a plurality of receptacle contacts into a second common base interchangeable with the first common base. Claim 33 has been amended to recite that the first common base and the second common base are substantially identical and interchangeable. The interchangeability of the first and second common bases can simplify manufacturing and reduce manufacturing costs. *See* pg. 2, lines 1-8; pg. 5, lines 17-25; pg. 12, lines 26-30; and pg. 13, line 1 of the as-filed application.

The receptacle base wall (326) disclosed in Lemke has medial slots (364, 366, 368, 370, 374, 376) formed therein for receiving a ground/power contact (382). Figure 25 of Lemke shows the medial slots as having a substantially straight portion and an adjoining divergent portion.

The plug base wall (432) of Lemke includes contact receiving slots (452, 454, 456, 458, 460) for receiving power/ground contacts (462). Figures 24 and 25 of Lemke show the contact receiving slots as being substantially straight.

Applicants respectfully submit that the geometric differences between the medial slots of the receptacle base wall (236) and the contact receiving slots of the plug base wall (432) of Lemke prevent the receptacle base wall and the plug base wall from being interchangeable.

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Lemke neither teaches nor suggest a first common base and a second common base that are substantially identical and interchangeable, inserting a plurality of receptacle contacts into a second common base interchangeable with the first common base, or a first common base and a second common base that are substantially identical and interchangeable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 10, and 33 (and claims 7, 8, 11-13, 15-18, 23, 24, and 27, which depend from claims 1 or 10) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested. Withdrawal of the objections to claims 2-6, 9, 14, 25, 26, 28, and 34, which depend from claims 1, 10, or 33, is also requested.

Claim 31 of the present application recites a base comprising a plurality of diamond shaped pockets.

The Examiner acknowledges in the office action that Lemke does not disclose a base having diamond shaped pockets. Office action at pg. 7, lines 10, 11. The office action states: "... applicants have presented no explanation that these particular configurations of the

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pockets are significant or are anything more than one of numerous configurations a person of ordinary skill in the art would find obvious for the purpose of receiving fusible elements." *Id.* at pg. 7, lines 13-16 and pg. 9, lines 12-15.

In response, Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the following language in the as-filed application: "The diamond shape construction of the pockets 25 ensures wetting around the perimeter of the contacts as described above." As-filed application at page 12, lines 10 and 11. Applicants respectfully note that this statement refers to the shape of the pockets (25) themselves, and not to the interstitial diamond-shaped pattern in which the pockets (25) can be arranged on the base (14).

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the plug base wall (432) of Lemke with diamond shaped pockets to arrive at the invention recited in claim 31 of the present application. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 31 (and claim 32, which depends therefrom) is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

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